

Historic and Archaeological Preservation

The laws and regulations pertaining to cultural resource protection and management require the FHWA to ensure that archaeological and historical work is conducted early in the development of FHWA-aided projects. The results, conclusions, and recommendations of such work are to be integrated into the decision making process.

Archaeological Work

Project Discussion

Before an archaeological investigation can be done, the archaeologist needs to be provided with a discussion of the project along with a set of project graphics. Refer to the Early Coordination section for a discussion of the items to be included. This information is forwarded to the archaeologist or to the agent responsible for the archaeological work. If the environmental document is being written by consulting firm, the firm is directly responsible for having the archaeology completed. For city or county projects, the local agency or their consultant has the responsibility of finding someone to perform the archaeology. A list of qualified people and organizations approved to perform the required archaeology in Indiana may be obtained by contacting the SHPO's office.

Records Checks

The first step in the required archaeological work is a records check. The archaeologist checks archaeological literature and records at the university(ies) closest to the project site to see if there are previously recorded sites which may be affected by the project. Sites in the approximate area of the project will be noted and located on a USGS quad map. The archaeologist then will prepare a report detailing the results of the records check and makes recommendations regarding further archaeological work. In particular, the need for an on-site archaeological survey.

Archaeological Surveys

An archaeological survey consists of the archaeologist systematically traversing the project area. He may also make inquiries of landowners, local people, and collectors of Indian artifacts to obtain information regarding unrecorded archaeological sites and to accumulate additional data for previously known sites.

If survey conditions are satisfactory, the archaeologist walks the land in search of archaeological material. If there are locations in which visibility is insufficient (e.g., pasture or woods), small holes may be dug to see if archaeological material is present. This procedure is referred to as shovel probing or shovel testing.

To avoid possible delays in the progress of a project, the area surveyed by the archaeologist should extend somewhat beyond the proposed project limits. This will cover minor project design changes

(i.e. additional project length, additional right-of-way widths, incidental construction, temporary run-arounds, channel work, and frontage roads). The total area surveyed should be clearly delineated in the archaeological report. A major design revision will require that the project site be re-visited.

If a project has multiple alternates, a preliminary field survey may be conducted for each alternative. The results of this work will be taken into consideration in the selection of a proposed alternative. After a proposed alternative has been selected, a full scale archaeological survey will be conducted.

After the survey has been completed, an archaeological report is written. Often the archaeology is terminated at this point with no further archaeological work and no mitigation measures being recommended. However, additional archaeological investigations and/or certain archaeological precautions are sometimes necessary. The survey report is then sent to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology of the IDNR for review.

Additional Archaeology

Additional archaeological work (e.g., more survey or excavation) may be necessary. If additional work is done, then a report of that work is written and submitted to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology for review using the same procedure as described for survey reports.

Archaeological Reports and the Environmental Study

The environmental study should include a summary of the archaeological work (including a clear delineation of the area surveyed) and the final archaeological recommendations. Specific site information will be held as confidential information except in studies going to FHWA.

Historical Work

In 1966 Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in order to ensure that the impacts of growth and development are considered in the planning and implementation of Federal projects and programs. The act sought to preserve community character and cultural roots expressed in historic properties. NHPA strives to make Federal agencies publicly accountable for impacts on historical properties. Section 106 (36 CFR 800) of the NHPA requires that Federal agencies assess all effects their undertakings will have on historic properties. The NHPA defines an undertaking as “a project, activity or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including: a) those carried out by or on behalf of the agency; b) those carried out with Federal financial assistance; c) those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; d) those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency. For the purpose of Section 106, historic properties are limited to those that are on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places. The National Register was established by the NHPA to afford protection to cultural resources (districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects) of national, regional, state, or local significance. The NHPA created the Advisory Council on Historical Preservation to advise Congress and the President on matters of historical preservation and to review actions under Section 106.

National Register of Historic Places:

<http://www.nr.nps.gov/>

National Register Evaluation Criteria:

<http://www.achp.gov/nrcriteria.html>

Section 106 Regulations User's Guide:

<http://www.achp.gov/usersguide.html>